

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

Thursday, February 20. 1706.

I have been remarking a little the State of Foreign Affairs, to give Breath to the long Discourses, I have made on the Union of these Kingdoms, and in my last I remark'd a little the unaccountable Posture of things in *Germany*, how the Emperor had rejected the Treaty with the *Hungarians*, and yet was too weak to reduce them ; and how by strange, and to us inscrutable Councils, the Politicks of those Parts permitted Princes to put all their Fortunes at the Mercy of every Contingency, and yet carry it with the same Haughtiness, as if they were in Circumstances of Victory and Conquest.

I shall leave this to be illustrated by the Consequence of another Affair, and that is the present Posture of the King of *Sweden*.

The Mystery of the Peace between *Hip* and the *Saxons*, I believe, is not yet unravell'd ; nor does the knowing Part of the World pretend to have penetrated into the Design of the *Swede*, who is now with a triumphing Army in the Bowels of the Empire.

If the King of *Sweden* compleats his Army to 52000 Men, or as our Accounts tell us— Were I to ask any of the Emperors, Statesmen, who have advis'd him to reject a Peace with the *Hungarians* ; whether, if the *Swedes* should send to the Emperor a peremptory Order to make Peace with them on their own Terms, or that he should visit him in his Imperial City, the Emperor would refuse it.—I Wonder, what Answer they would give to it?

It

It is most certain, the Power of the *Swede* is *at this time* formidable to the Empire, and as he is perfectly free and unembarrass'd, and the Empire wholly besieg'd with Wars and Enemies, as well as miserably divided in Interests and Factions— — — If then such a new Force should fall on the Emperor, I believe, no Man will question my having Reason enough to say, he is not in a Condition to look him in the Face.

This farther adds to the Wonder of the Emperors Measures, which at this Distance are not to be penetrated— — — That lying so expos'd, he should yet reject such Terms of Accommodation, as even the Mediators thought reasonable; what the Consequence of these things may be to him and his Affairs, I will not pretend to determine; but I dare say, he will be the less pitied by all Mankind, if any thing fatal to him should happen from the Conjunction of these Affairs.

I know, some People suspect the *Swedes* on another side, and that their Design is rather in Favour of the *French*— — — I shall not

determine: I grant, while he pursued the King of *Poland*, who would have been a useful Ally and Confederate, and always heartily espoused the general Interest; I say, while this was in Agitation, I could not but look on the *Swede* as eventually, whether designedly or not, an Assistant to *France*.

But since the King of *Poland* has listen'd to the Necessity of his Affairs, and like a wise Prince thrown up a desperate Game, and is now at Liberty to come into the Confederacy, and act with his whole Force; I cannot but leave the future Proceedings of the *Swede* without Censure, till the Consequence shall farther discover the Bottom of his Designs.

Indeed I cannot but a little wonder at a Prophetick Attempt, which I have met with in Verse, that seems to point directly at this very Prince, and this very time, tho' wrote above 30 Year ago; and tho' I am one of the remotest Men in *England*, that takes Notice of such things, and have a very mean Opinion of modern Prophecy; yet I cannot but give you the Passage in our next.

MISCELLANEA.

I Enter'd in my last on some serious Enquiries into the Case of employing, settling and providing for the Poor; in order, if possible, to prevent any thing fatal to the English Manufacture, which I cannot but apprehend from the projected Schemes, I have seen formerly advanc'd by some Gentlemen on that Head.

'Tis hard our Evils cannot be cur'd, without Evils of so much worse Consequence being brought upon us; and I cannot but with all Barneftess and Humility entreat the Gentlemen of the House of Commons, if any such Law comes before them, as employing and settling the Poor, by erecting Trades and Manufactures in every Village or Parish in *England*, on the private Stocks of the Inhabitants or collected Stocks of the Parish or County to take it into their Consideration, and seriously examine, whether the Consequences shall not be?

1. Ruining and suppressing the Manufacture in *England*, by transposing them from place to place, corrupting their Kinds, debasing their Quality, lessening their Reputation, by which they maintain our Commerce abroad, in spight of all the real Endeavours of Neighbour Nations; of which I shall speak at large very quickly.

2. Whether they shall not in the Consequence ruin, or at leatt greatly impoverish the great Trading Towns in *England*, which are now like separate Colonies in every distinct Manufacture; who, when the Villages are supply'd by petty and debased Works, shall decay in their Trade, grow miserable in their being burthen'd with Poor, and in time come to the same Ruin, which we see now at *Winchelsea*, *Sandwich*, *Brimber*, and other Towns, which once flourish'd in Trade and People?

3. Whether

3. Whether they shall not by these things increase the Number of the Poor, not lessen them, and act a most impolitick Cruelty under the Covering of Charity, by robbing industrious poor Families of their Bread, to feed and employ a vagabond Race, who ought by Discipline, Laws and Correction, to be oblig'd to seek the Manufactures, and labour where it is to be found, rather than have it brought to them?

4. Whether this Method will not in time prevent the Growth and Encrease of great Towns, which is the Glory and Wealth of the Kingdom, and rather reduce England to one great Village, by employing the People in their scatter'd Habitations, rather than incorporate them into Bodies, which is certainly a Help to Trade, and adds to the Methods of Employment?

5. And Lastly, Whether the Politicks of Trade, I mean in the Dependence of one Country upon another, the trading with one another, exchanging one Kind of Goods for another, which is the Life and Being of Inland Commerce, and which I call, *I hope not improperly*, the Circulation of Trade, will not be effectually stabb'd by such a Contrivance as this?

6. Whether 200000 Families, who now are employ'd in, or depend upon the very Carriage of Goods, from place to place in England, shall not by such an Alteration made in our Trade, and by working every kind of Manufacture, in every place where it is worn, be at once depriv'd of their Employment, and either push'd into other Business; and consequently eat the Bread, other People must want, or be reduc'd to Poverty?

7. Whether all the Labour of Cattle, in the Carriages of Goods occasion'd by the Circulation of Trade, being on such a Stop of the Circulation useless, there must not great Quantities of Land lye unimprov'd, which is now employ'd for the Subsistence of these Cattle, and by Consequence make a considerable Abatement in the general Value of Land, which our landed Men will be sure to feel at last, tho' at present the Prospect may be too remote to affect them?

These are some Generals, I shall descend to them gradually, and hope in the Particulars to convince any thinking Person, who has a Value for England's Prosperity; that no Bill, to erect Work-houses of Woollen Manufactures for the Poor in every Parish, can pass without giving a mortal Wound to our Manufactures in England, and overthrowing all our inland Trade.

It is most certain, that the Land in England, subdivided Family by Family, and every Family to enjoy no more, than would decently support them, would maintain all the Inhabitants in England, if they were some Millions more than they are.

But as this levelling Project can never be put in Practice, the World being quite off of that original Way of living; so neither is it best for any Nation to do so; the Opulence, Grandeur and Power of Nations can never be thus rais'd, neither is the Concourse: ce suited either to the Encouragement of Arts, Learning, and all Sorts of active Virtue. There seems to be several lawful Ends of Life in the World, besides mere Living, Food and Raiment, and things convenient are indeed the main Affairs; but as Families rise, encrease here, are extinct there, and circumstance'd some for Improvement, and some for Decay; the Equality or Division cannot possibly last.

There will be rich and poor; the Diligent will improve, and the Slothful will decay; the Sluggard will be clothed in Rag, and the Good-Wife will be array'd in Purple; the Waster will starve, and the Good-Husband will be rich.

This is what we call Industry; and this Industry, as in private Affairs, so in publick, is still bless'd; this makes Nations populous, Kingdoms powerful, great Towns rise, others decay; brings Crowds to this Place, and leaves that bare of Inhabitants, as Opportunities present themselves to encourage and employ the Hands of those that seek it.

This is the Foundation of Commerce; for People living in Bodies make an Encrease of Trade, by occasioning Provisions, Necessaries, Goods, and all Sorts of Materials for that Way of Life to be carried from place to place for that Subsistence.